

WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS

Week ending March 7, 2008

State law assigns four core duties to the State Planning Office that include: 1) conducting continuing economic analysis, including economic forecasting, 2) coordinating the development of the State's economy and energy resources with the conservation of its natural resources; 3) providing technical assistance to towns and regions; and 4) providing technical assistance to the Governor and Legislature by undertaking special studies and plans and preparing policy alternatives.

DIRECTOR'S POLICY AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

New floodplain program manager appointed. Sue Baker became our new floodplain coordinator, effective March 3. Sue is a nationally-certified floodplain manager, one of only a handful in Maine. Before working in her current job in SPO's code enforcement officer training and certification program, Sue worked with the Maine floodplain program for 12 years, being promoted from clerk typist to planning and research associate to planner II. Sue was also SPO's employee of the year in 2005. She is extremely knowledgeable in the field and has a tremendous working relationship with scores of local officials and other professionals. We are delighted that she accepted our offer and that she'll be directing the National Flood Insurance Program here in Maine. **CONTACT:** Tony VanDenBossche at 287-1474 or tony.vandenbossche@maine.gov

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Snowboarders Recycle! A new ad featuring a hip snowboarder recycling is the first in a series promoting the Maine Recycles campaign. This week it attracted the attention of Reverb, a Maine based environmental organization that works around the country with rock bands and concert promoters. Reverb helps make concerts "green" educational events, which work to demonstrate practices for a healthier planet.

Now the State Planning Office plans to join the fun by participating in Reverb's event on March 15 and 16 at the Sunday River Ski Resort in Bethel. Reverb is coordinating an



"eco-village" at Sunday River as part of the IZSTYLE tour of New England ski slopes. The Maine Recycles Steering Committee will staff a table at the event where snowboarders and skiers can win prizes made from recycled materials as they pledge to recycle. **CONTACT: Jetta**

Antonakos at 287-9074 or jetta.antonakos@maine.gov

LAND FOR MAINE'S FUTURE PROGRAM

The Land for Maine's Future Program recently completed work on the following projects.

GREAT POND MOUNTAIN WILDLANDS, East Orland, Hancock County. Located eight miles east of Belfast on Route 1, the 4,200 acre wild lands project is a significant addition to the conservation and recreational lands of the area as well as one of the largest single acquisitions by a local land trust in Maine. The project includes waterfront on the Dead River and the northern arm of Alamoosook Lake, as well as the whole of Hothole Valley. It is managed by the Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust for low impact recreation. For more information visit <http://www.greatpondtrust.org/Wildlands.htm>.

SEARS ISLAND MITIGATION FUND, the Emery Parcel, Lincolnville, Waldo County. The Land for Maine's Future Program is responsible for administering other funds. Working in partnership with the Coastal Mountains Land Trust, who pre-acquired this parcel, LMF administered Sears Island Consent Decree funds to enable the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife to acquire this 2.11 acre parcel. It was acquired to protect Atlantic salmon habitat along 200' of the Ducktrap River as well as to provide road access to adjacent conserved lands. **CONTACT: Steve Brooke at 287-6736 or [Steve Brooke](#) or Tim Glidden at 287-1487 or [Tim Glidden](#).**

MAINE COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

AmeriCorps Program readies Maine agencies for next grant competition. On March 31, the Maine Commission for Community Service will offer a webinar course on designing an AmeriCorps program in anticipation of the next major round of grant-making. The course, *Developing a Blueprint for AmeriCorps*, is open to teams of local organizations

that might want to submit a proposal in the fall 2008 AmeriCorps grant competition. For an outline or to register for the webinar: www.MaineServiceCommission.gov. The deadline for webinar registration is Friday, March 21.

AmeriCorps grants provide financial support to public and nonprofit organizations that sponsor volunteer service programs. Eligible applicants include faith-based and community-based nonprofit organizations, higher education institutions, Indian tribes, local education agencies, and public agencies. AmeriCorps program grantees recruit, train, and place AmeriCorps members in service assignments to meet critical community needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. **CONTACT:** Maryalice Crofton at 287-8931 or service.commission@maine.gov

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY

Governor's Energy Efficiency Summit scheduled for April 3. *Strengthening Business through Energy Savings*, a one-day summit will feature ways to reduce energy costs and improve business operations. Aimed at industry, finance and banking, small business, entrepreneurs, builders, energy sector, government agencies, manufacturing, schools and hospitals, and environmental organizations, participants can share their own views and needs while hearing from others about how they made changes that have improved their businesses while helping protect one of Maine's key assets, our environment.

The program will be held at the Augusta Civic Center. Pre-registration deadline is March 20. For more information or to register on-line: <http://www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/policy/EnergySummit.html>. **CONTACT:** John Kerry at 287-3292 or john.kerry@maine.gov

Heating fuel prices rise again. The Office of Energy Independence and Security's March 3, 2008 survey of home heating oil prices found the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be up by \$.08 since the last week at \$3.45 per gallon and \$1.06 higher than last year at this time. The statewide kerosene price average is up by \$.08 since last week at \$3.86 per gallon and \$1.08 higher than last year at this time. The propane price survey found the statewide average to be \$3.05 per gallon which is \$.08 more than last week and \$0.57 higher than last year at this time.

The price of WTI crude oil broke an inflation-adjusted record on March 3, trading at 103.63 per barrel and continues its rise as speculators move into the oil market. Investors are looking for hard goods as a refuge from the failing dollar. In the last two months \$40 billion has been invested into oil and hard commodities markets (more than all of last year combined). This influx of capital has contributed significantly to the recent rise in oil prices.

The Office conducts a weekly survey of home heating oil, kerosene, and propane prices from November through March. For more information:

<http://www.maineenergyinfo.com/oil/index.html>. **CONTACT: Ian Burnes at 287-8927**
or ian.burnes@maine.gov